DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 287 606 PS 016 940

AUTHOR Ziegelman, Elinor G.
TITLE The Effects of Home-Based and Center-Based Teaching Strategies on Head Start Children's Language Development.
PUB DATE [86]
NOTE 12p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Comparative Analysis; Disadvantaged Youth; *Home Schooling; *Language Acquisition; *Parent Participation; *Preschool Children; Preschool Education; Pretests Posttests; *Program Effectiveness; *School Activities
IDENTIFIERS Home Based Programs; *Parents as Teachers; Project Head Start

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine the effect of a parent-teaching home-based program, as compared to a teacher-oriented center-based program, on children's preschool language skill development. Participants were 27 boys and 26 girls selected from 116 enrollees in a 4-county Head Start program. A pretest-posttest control group design was used. The experimental group consisted of 23 home-based subjects and 30 center-based subjects. For approximately seven months, parents in the home-based group received weekly instruction outlining teaching procedures for a language skill their child had not developed. Throughout each week, parents followed instructional guidelines and recorded their child's daily progress. Members of the center-based group received class instruction and were periodically tested in a classroom situation. The independent variable was home-based language instruction. The dependent variable was language development as measured by the Learning Accomplishment Profile, which was administered as pretest and posttest. In general, the study demonstrated that the weekly parent-teaching home-based program had a significantly greater effect on children's language development than the class-oriented center-based program. Home-based boys made significantly greater language gains than home- or center-based girls. (Author/RH)

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THE EFFECTS OF HOME-BASED AND CENTER-BASED TEACHING STRATEGIES ON HEAD START CHILDREN'S LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

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Elinor G. Ziegelman
Home-based Coordinator
Morgan, Clay, Owen and Putnam County
Head Start

PS 016940

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine the effect of the parent-teaching Home-based program as compared to the teacher-oriented Center-based program on children's preschool language skill development. The sample consisted of 27 boys and 26 girls from 116 enrollees in a four-county Head Start program. The independent variable consisted of Home-based language instruction and the dependent variable was language development as measured by the Learning Accomplishment Profile. Three t-tests for independent data were calculated using a change score which was determined from the pre and posttest. A significant difference was found for all boys and girls ($p = < .05$) for Home-based teaching and language development. A significance was also noted for boys ($p = < .05$) for the Home-based teaching and language development. No significance ($p = > .05$) was found for girls for Home-based teaching and language development.

A number of early studies involving the education of disadvantaged parents and their children contributed to Head Start development. The literature revealed that programs which used home visits alone or in combination with preschool classes were effective in producing significant academic gains (Beller, 1973; Gray, Ramsey, & Klaus, 1982; Becher, 1982; Nurss & Hodges, 1982; Stallings & Stipek, 1986). Home-teaching programs addressed academic perfcrmance by investigating language development and parent attitudes (Gordon & Jester, 1983; Beller, 1973; Gray, Ramsey, & Klaus, 1982; Stallings & Stipek, 1986). Parent-teaching programs that employed various strategies with a significant adult as facilitator were equally effective in promoting children's language development (Beller, 1973; Nurss & Hodges, 1982; Becher, 1982; Gray, Ramsey, & Klaus, 1982; Lay-Dopyera & Dopyera, 1982; Stallings & Stipek, 1986). Boys' and girls' language development improved significantly as a group with parent-teaching (Gordon & Jester, 1973; Stallings & Stipek, 1986; Becher, 1982; Gray, Ramsey, & Klaus, 1982). Finally, a significant relationship was found between positive parent attitudes and positive child performance (Taylor, Cornwell, & Riley, 1984), especially for boys (Gordon & Jester, 1973; Hinde, Stevenson-Hinde, Jr., &

Tamplin, 1985; Stallings & Stipek, 1986; Becher, 1982).

METHOD

Subjects and Design

Subjects were 53 Head Start children enrolled in a four-county Head Start program. The 27 boys and 26 girls were selected on the basis of age (42-52 months), parent educational level (grade nine or above) and parent desire for program enrollment. Children who were diagnosed speech handicapped or previously enrolled in Head Start were excluded. Subjects were representative of rural midwestern Head Start populations.

A pretest posttest control group design was used. The experimental group consisted of 23 Home-based subjects (15 boys, 8 girls) and 30 Center-based subjects (12 boys, 18 girls) from three counties. One country was excluded due to enrollment and staff changes. All subjects were given a pretest and posttest that measured language development.

Instrumentation

The Learning Accomplishment Profile (LAP) (Sanford & Zelman, 1981), a seven-area standardized skill assessment for normal and handicapped children, was used to measure

language development. Fifty-five expressive and receptive language skills were included in the pretest and posttest.

On September 3, 1986, the language pretest was administered. A trained Center-based teacher and Home Visitor in each county used blind testing (experimental and control status of children unknown) to administer the LAP individually for all subjects in their respective class/home settings. Pretest scores were graphed on the LAP Age Profile with number of skills achieved corresponding to child's developmental chronological age.

On April 1, 1987, Center-based teachers and Home Visitors followed the identical pretest procedure to complete the assessment.

Procedure

From September 3, 1986 to April 1, 1987 the experimental Home-based group received parent instruction. During each weekly session, a Home Visitor introduced an Activity Chart (Zeger, 1984) which outlined teaching procedures for an unachieved LAP language skill. Throughout the week, the parent followed Chart guidelines and recorded the child's daily progress. A score of "+" or "-" indicating child's success or failure was transferred to the corresponding LAP skill to provide

totals for posttest scores. The control Center-based group received class instruction and were periodically tested in a classroom situation, their LAP scores recorded and totaled.

Results

Three t-tests for independent data were calculated using a change score for each child. Subtraction of the pretest score from the posttest score provided a change or difference score. The means, standard deviations and t-test value are provided in the following table.

Insert Table 1 about here

The t-test for groups (boys and girls was significant ($t=1.9068$, $df=51$, $p=<.05$) which supports the hypothesis that there is a greater effect of the parent-teaching Home-based program as compared to the teacher-oriented Center-based program on boys' and girls' language development.

The t-test for girls' groups was not significant ($t=.0627$, $df=24$, $p=>.05$) and did not support the hypothesis that there is a greater effect of the parent

teaching Home-based program as compared to the teacher oriented Center-based program on girls' language development.

The t-test for boys' groups was significant ($t=2.0444$, $df-25$, $p= <.05$) which supports the hypothesis that there is a greater effect of the parent-teaching Home-based program as compared to the teacher-oriented Center-based program on boys' language development.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study support the findings in the literature (Becher, 1982; Beller, 1973; Gordon & Jester, 1973; Gray, Ramsey, & Klaus, 1982; Hinde, Stevenson-Hinde, Jr., & Tamplin, 1985; Lay-Dopyera & Dopyera, 1982; Nurss & Hodges, 1982; Stallings & Stipek, 1986). In general, the study demonstrated that the weekly parent-teaching Home-based program had a greater effect on children's language development than the class-oriented Center-based program. Specifically, Home-based parents, selected for positive attitudes, were introduced to a structured, systematic method of teaching by an adult facilitator. Ongoing instruction resulted in a higher level of language proficiency as demonstrated by children's achievement.

Based on the mean performance for Home-based boys and all Home-based subjects, language gains were greater for boys than for girls. Home-based boys made greater language gains than Home- or Center-based girls as supported by the hypothesis tested.

According to Stallings & Stipek (1986), increased language ability for boys may be due to positive maternal attitude and individual instruction. This study supports the findings of Stallings & Stipek.

Further investigations of the Home-based parent-teaching and Center-based Classroom teaching of language skills could involve variables such as number of siblings, single-parent families, I.Q., socioeconomic level and rural as compared to town living.

Table 1

A t-test Analysis Between Home-based and Center-based Programs and Language Performance

Headstart Groups	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-value	df	Probability Level
			All Subjects			
Home-based	23	14.96	7.32			
Center-based	30	10.98	8.04	*1.9068	51	.05
			Girls			
Home-based	8	11.25	6.86			
Center-based	18	11.06	7.46	.0627	24	.05
			Boys			
Home-based	15	16.93	6.97			
Center-based	12	10.58	9.18	*2.0444	25	.05

*Significant at .05 level for one-tailed test (CV=1.708) 25df

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